Varanasi route, it was operative upto 25.3.2006 to cater to the tourist traffic. The flights will again resume from 1st October, 2006 to cater to seasonal traffic. Indian airlines is currently operating a daily flight on Mumbai-Delhi Varanasi sector.

National Civil Aviation Grid

3964. SHRI C. PERUMAL: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is proposed to set up National Civil Aviation Grid; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) No such proposal is under consideration of the Government.

Expansion of Patna Airport

†3965. SHRI MANGANI LAL MANDAL. Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that since Patna airport does not have required lenght of runway which leads to technical difficulties in landing and take-off in summer season;

(b) whether it is also a fact that having considered the possibility of increasing the length of the Patna airport, a couple of years back, the Ministry had prepared a plan which has not yet materialised; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The physical runway length at Patna airport is 7500 feet and usable length is 6400 feet due to the presence of obstacles (Trees and other obstructions) in the approach path resulting in aircraft operating with load penalty.

A proposal for changing the orientation of the present runway was explored by Airports Authority of India in November, 2000 to facilitate

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

larger length of runway but the same could not materialised as the State Government was not agreeable to acquire the additional required land and hand over to Airports Authority of India free of cost and free from all encumbrances.

State Government of Bihar has been requested to prune/cut the identified trees to required safe height. State Government has not taken any action in the matter. Once all the identified trees are pruned/cut and other obstructions removed by the State Government, the usable length of runway will increase for operation of A-320/B-737-800 type of aircraft with reduced load penalty. Further extention of runway is not feasible due to site constraints and non-availability of land.

National carriers share in air traffic

3966. SHRI T.T.V. DHINAKARAN: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the growth percentage of domestic passenger air traffic during the last three years;

(b) the percentage of air traffic that has gone to the national air carriers out of that;

(c) the reasons for the large chunk of the increased air traffic going the private carriers; and

(d) the steps taken to give competitive edge to the national air carriers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) A growth of 9.20%, 24.97% and 22.75% has been registered in domestic passengers traffic during 2003, 2004 and 2005 respectively.

(b) A market share of 39.8%, 37.9% and 31.0% was handled by Indian Airlines and Alliance Air during 2003, 2004 and 2005.

(c) The increase in the share of private airlines in domestic air traffic is primarily due to establishment of new airlines and large scale induction of capacity in the domestic sector. Some private airlines have also gained market share due to lower air fare.